

MINUTES
Fairfax County School Board
Electronic Special Meeting
December 7, 2020
11:00 a.m.

Work Session\ELECTRONIC

December 7, 2020

All Board members and Division staff participated electronically via Blackboard Collaborate Ultra due to the COVID-19 emergency and the Governor of Virginia's amended Order of the Governor and State Health Commissioner Declaration of Public Health Emergency, Order of Public Health Emergency One issued March 20; Executive Order Number 53: Temporary Restrictions On Restaurants, Recreational, Entertainment, Gatherings, Non-Essential Retail Businesses, And Closure Of K-12 Schools Due To Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) issued March 23; Order of the Governor and State Health Commissioner Order of Public Health Emergency Two, issued March 25. Members of the public attended virtually via Public Access Channel 99 and at FCPS.EDU/TV.

1.01 Call to Order

Chairman Anderson called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. with the following Board members present:

Karen Corbett Sanders (Mt. Vernon)	Megan O. McLaughlin (Braddock)
Tamara Derenak Kaufax (Lee)	Melanie Meren (Hunter Mill)
Ricardy Anderson (Mason)	Abrar Omeish (At Large)
Laura Jane Cohen (Springfield)	Stella Pekarsky (Sully)
Karl Frisch (Providence)	Rachna Sizemore Heizer (At Large)
Karen Keys-Gamarra (At Large)	Elaine Tholen (Dranesville)

Also present were Superintendent Brabrand; Deputy Superintendent Frances Ivey; Division Counsel John Foster; and Clerk of the Board Ilene Muhlberg. Student Representative to the Board Nathan Onibudo was absent.

1.02 Closed Meeting

Ms. Cohen moved, and Ms. Omeish seconded, that the Board go into closed session to discuss the following: 1) specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by counsel pursuant to Sections 2.2-3711(A)(7) and (A)(8) of the Code of Virginia, specifically a) *K.C. v. School Board*, Case No. No. 2020-17283 (Fairfax Circuit Court), and b) personnel matters, 2) tests, examinations, and other information pursuant to Sections 2.2-3705.1(4) and 2.2-3711(A)(12), and 3) discuss and consider the employment, performance and salaries of specific employees pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(1). The motion **passed unanimously**.

The Board met in closed session from 11:00 a.m. to 1:32 p.m.

1.03 Certification of Closed Meeting Compliance (Exhibit A)

Mr. Frisch moved, and Ms. Omeish seconded, that in order to comply with Section 2.2-3712 (D) of the Code of Virginia, it is necessary for the Board to certify that since the

Defendant's Exhibit

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FCSB-TJ000021249

Fairfax County School Board convened a closed meeting on December 7, 2020, to the best of each member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the Board during the closed meeting. The motion **passed unanimously**.

1.04 Confirmation of Action Taken in Closed Meeting (Exhibit B)

Mr. Frisch moved, and Ms. Omeish seconded, that the Chairman of the School Board be authorized to execute, on behalf of the Board, the contract of the Chief Operating Officer as discussed in closed meeting. The motion **passed 8-0-4**: Ms. Omeish, Ms. Pekarsky, Ms. Sizemore Heizer, Ms. Tholen, Ms. Meren, Ms. Cohen, Mr. Frisch, and Dr. Anderson voted "aye"; Ms. Keys-Gamarra, Ms. Derenak Kaufax, Mrs. Corbett Sanders, and Ms. McLaughlin abstained from the vote.

The Board took a brief recess from 1:33 p.m. to 2:06 p.m.

DISCUSSION

2.01 Call to Order

Chair Anderson called the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m. with the following Board members present:

Karen Corbett Sanders (Mt. Vernon)	Megan O. McLaughlin (Braddock)
Tamara Derenak Kaufax (Lee)	Melanie Meren (Hunter Mill)
Ricardy Anderson (Mason)	Abrar Omeish (At Large)
Laura Jane Cohen (Springfield)	Stella Pekarsky (Sully)
Karl Frisch (Providence)	Rachna Sizemore Heizer (At Large)
Karen Keys-Gamarra (At Large)	Elaine Tholen (Dranesville)

Also present were Division Superintendent Scott Brabrand; Clerk of the Board Ilene Muhlberg; Deputy Executive Assistant and Deputy Clerk of the Board Beverly Madeja; Chief Operating Officer Marty Smith; Principal of Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology Dr. Bonitatibus; Admissions Director of Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology Jeremy Shughart; and certain other individuals. The Student Representative to the School Board Nathan Onibudo was absent.

2.02 Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST) Admissions (Exhibit C)

- Meeting managers Omeish and Frisch introduced the Superintendent, who provided an overview of the proposals and noted that the goal of the proposals is leading with equity at the center.
- Staff presented details regarding previous proposals, and two admissions options for Board action at the December 17, 2020, regular meeting, including stakeholder engagement efforts, communications plans, accountability metrics and the regional pathway process.

- Staff presented a new hybrid merit lottery option and the new holistic review option and reviewed guiding principles with both options to maintain high standards while identifying potential talent across the district by removing barriers to TJHSST admissions.
- The Board discussed providing more opportunities to more students across the district while ensuring the process remains objective; and the possibility of adding teacher/trusted adult recommendations to the admissions materials.
- The Board discussed the options including teacher recommendations; data around other schools' lottery successes and admission processes; accountability metrics; potential hurdles to admissions process across the district; and maintaining academic excellence with the options.
- The Board stressed the need to receive the new Chief Equity Officer's input on the admission process as soon as possible.
- The Board reached consensus to table discussion on the following next steps until Chair's meeting on December 9, 2020 with Board members submitting final next steps by 9:00 a.m. on December 8, 2020:
 - Please provide a recommendation of how we can screen students in the latter part of ES, 5th or 6th grade to ensure that they get the supports/encouragements for MS curriculum and activities to provide a pathway to the opportunity of TJ. Maybe WISC.
 - Determine a way to incorporate teacher recommendations as a data point for admissions. Streamline the current recommendation so that teacher workload concerns are addressed, and potential bias is removed.
 - Provide additional analysis of by school approach (both merit lottery and holistic approach).
 - Please examine minimums rather than max caps. Provide info on school level minimums as well
 - Develop accountability metrics that consider student/academic outcomes to ensure student success and high academic standards for all. Consider including metrics regarding retention and consistent and proportional utilization of the most advanced classes and labs.
 - Please ensure that we have consistent availability of hands on science and science fairs at both the ES and MS level.
 - Develop a rubric for teacher recommendations to ensure that input be available, but it is standardized throughout the county. This can be an equity issue.
 - Explain how this new process will work with the process to select Sophomore transfer students.
 - As a new process is implemented, recognize that our base high schools will need to provide more high-level math and science courses for students that do not go to TJ. Expand on these opportunities to get to students that can use them but may choose not to go to TJ for reasons like-sports, transportation, culture, etc. This needs to be part of our overall study of what STEAM opportunities we are offering for all students.
 - Ensure language limitations or disability manifestations is accommodated in the problem-solving essay and student information sheet. IEP accommodations may not be sufficient since those accommodations were not developed with the needs of accessing the TJ application in mind. Consider requiring consulting IEP teams in the process of developing accommodations required for SWD to access the application requirements (SIS and essay).

- Consider using the TJ alumni to aid in outreach to the potential students in under-represented schools and encourage them to do so.
- Consider asking current TJ students to be mentors and/or outreach to potential students.
- Clarify how STEM aptitude, passion, and talent is assessed through the SIS and problem-solving essay
- If the Board wants to pursue teacher recommendations, please work with Principal Bonitatibus to develop more helpful processes for this tool.
- Please consider expanding the pool of recommendations if they are reintroduced to include a teacher or other adult.
- Confirm that each mechanism for outreach will be thought through with an eye towards best industry practices -- including mailings, email, etc.

2.03 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.


Chairman of the Board


Clerk of the Board